
Manner: NATURAL

A death that is classified as natural comes under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner because of the sudden and unexpected nature of the death, because there is no physician who has knowledge or awareness of the decedent's condition, or when circumstances surrounding death arouse suspicion. In these situations the Medical Examiner becomes responsible for certification of death. It should be stressed that the natural deaths investigated by the Medical Examiner are not representative of all natural deaths in the general population, because these jurisdictional considerations introduce a significant sampling bias.

In 1999, there were 511 deaths attributed to natural causes that came under the jurisdiction of the King County Medical Examiner, representing 35% (511/1468) of the cases investigated. Eighty percent (409/511) of these deaths were certified by the King County Medical Examiner, and 20% (102/511) were certified by attending physicians who had knowledge of the decedent's medical condition. Autopsies were performed in 72% (293/409) of the deaths certified as natural by the King County Medical Examiner, which includes autopsies performed in all 11 deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

The data presented in this section are derived from the 511 natural deaths under the King County Medical Examiner's jurisdiction. Cardiovascular disease accounted for the greatest proportion of natural deaths. Most deaths in which an autopsy was not performed were certified as due to "probable arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease".

Table 5-1 Disease Processes Causing Natural Deaths in 1999

NUMBER OF DEATHS	DISEASE DESCRIPTION
CARDIOVASCULAR	
8	Aortic aneurysm / dissection
129	Arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease
2	Bacterial endocarditis
1	Cardiac dysrhythmia
10	Cardiomyopathy
3	Congenital heart disease
1	Congestive heart failure
33	Hypertensive ASCVD / Hypertensive heart disease
4	Other
113	Probable arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease
2	Valvular heart disease
306	TOTAL CARDIOVASCULAR
CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM	
6	Epilepsy (idiopathic & other non-trauma etiologies)
3	Cerebrovascular incident(s)
4	Other
2	Seizure disorder
4	Spontaneous intracerebral hemorrhage
9	Spontaneous rupture of aneurysm
2	Subarachnoid hemorrhage
30	TOTAL CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM
ENDOCRINE	
6	Diabetic ketoacidosis
4	Diabetes Mellitus
1	Pancreatitis
11	TOTAL ENDOCRINE

Table 5-1 Disease Processes Causing Natural Deaths in 1999 (Cont...)

NUMBER OF DEATHS	DISEASE DESCRIPTION
GASTROINTESTINAL	
1	Bacterial peritonitis
2	Gastrointestinal hemorrhage
1	Perforating ulcer
1	Other
5	TOTAL GASTROINTESTINAL
HEPATIC	
1	Fatty liver
6	Chronic ethanolism
11	Cirrhosis
1	Other
1	Hepatitis
20	TOTAL HEPATIC
MALIGNANCY	
17	TOTAL MALIGNANCY
OTHER PROCESSES	
1	Anoxic encephalopathy
14	Chronic ethanolism
4	Chronic renal disease
5	HIV / AIDS
4	Infection
6	Necrotizing Fascitis
3	Prematurity
1	Presumptive Death - Body Not Recovered
8	Sepsis
3	Other
49	TOTAL OTHER PROCESSES
13	CAUSE UNDETERMINED after complete autopsy including toxicological analysis

Table 5-1 Disease Processes Causing Natural Deaths in 1999 (Cont...)

NUMBER OF DEATHS	DISEASE DESCRIPTION
RESPIRATORY	
5	Asthma
15	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
15	Pneumonia
11	Pulmonary thromboembolus
11	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
3	Other
60	TOTAL RESPIRATORY
205	TOTAL Non-cardiovascular Cause of Death
306	TOTAL Cardiovascular Cause of Death
511	Total NATURAL DEATHS under KCMEO Jurisdiction, 1999

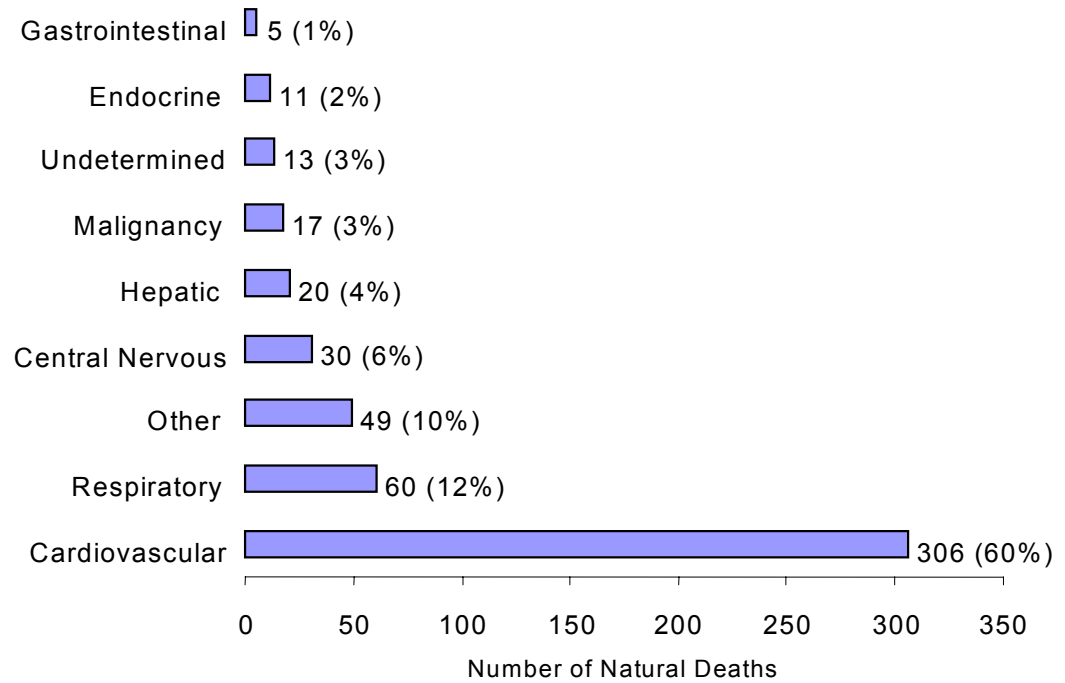
Graph 5-1 Deaths Due to Natural Causes in 1999

Table 5-2 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Race of the Decedent

DISEASE PROCESS / GENDER	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER		
Cardiovascular	251	30	17	3	5		306
<i>Male</i>	180	21	13	1	5	220	
<i>Female</i>	71	9	4	2	0	86	
Respiratory	46	8	4	1	1		60
<i>Male</i>	26	3	2	0	1	32	
<i>Female</i>	20	5	2	1	0	28	
Other	36	6	1	2	4		49
<i>Male</i>	26	3	0	1	3	33	
<i>Female</i>	10	3	1	1	1	16	
Central Nervous	18	7	4	0	1		30
<i>Male</i>	13	4	2	0	0	19	
<i>Female</i>	5	3	2	0	1	11	
Hepatic	17	3	0	0	0		20
<i>Male</i>	10	2	0	0	0	12	
<i>Female</i>	7	1	0	0	0	8	
Malignancy	15	2	0	0	0		17
<i>Male</i>	11	2	0	0	0	13	
<i>Female</i>	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Undetermined	11	0	2	0	0		13
<i>Male</i>	2	0	1	0	0	3	
<i>Female</i>	9	0	1	0	0	10	
Endocrine	8	1	0	0	2		11
<i>Male</i>	8	1	0	0	2	11	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Gastrointestinal	4	1	0	0	0		5
<i>Male</i>	4	0	0	0	0	4	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Total	406	58	28	6	13		511
Percent	79	11	5	1	3		

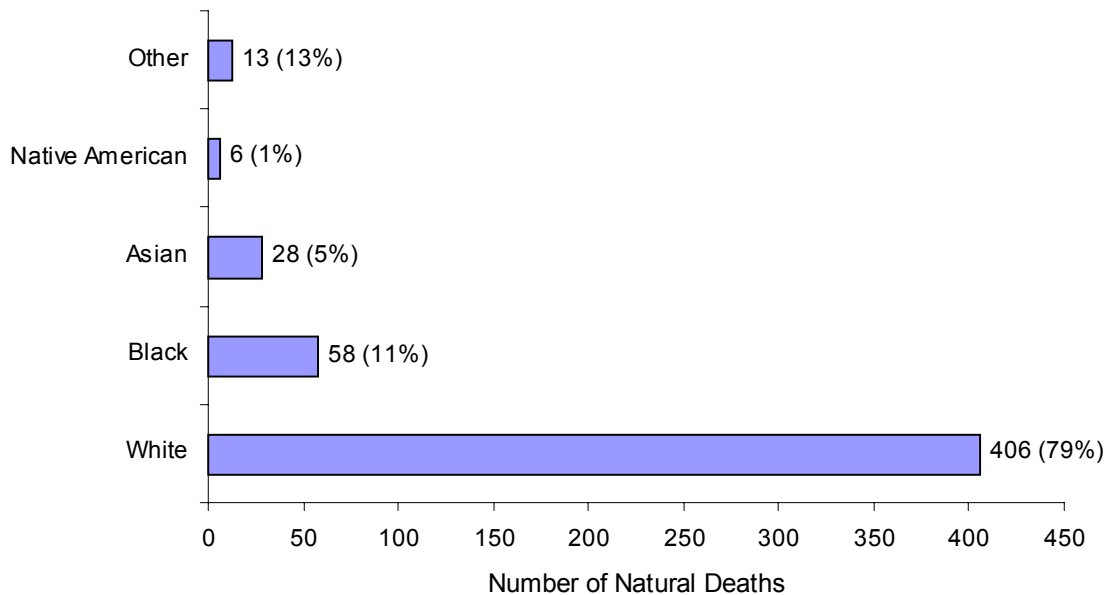
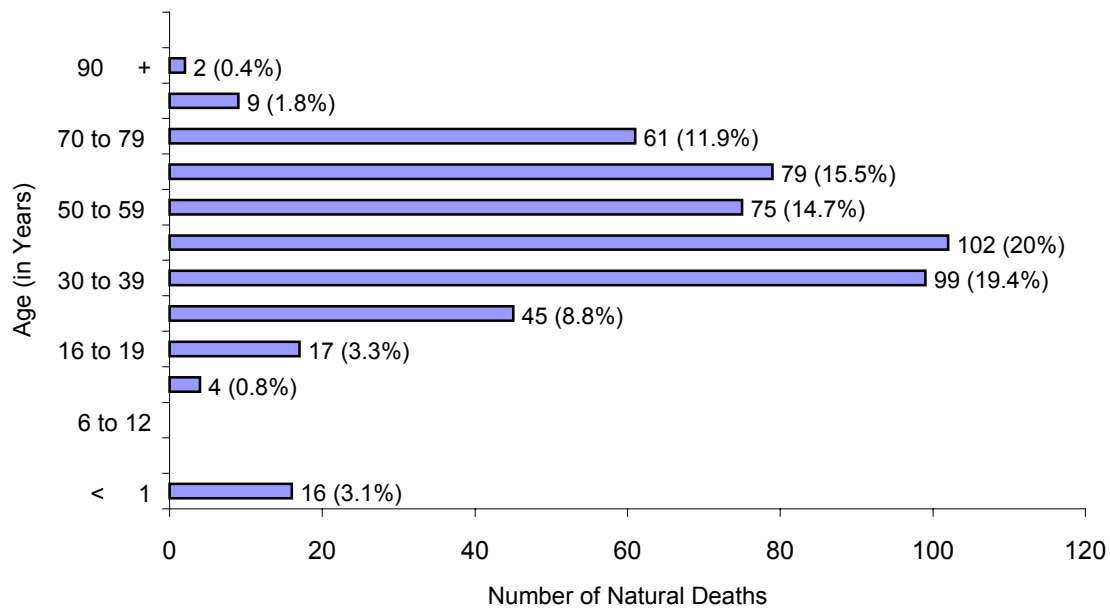
Graph 5-2 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Race of the Decedent**Graph 5-3 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Age Group of the Decedent**

Table 5-3 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Age Group of the Decedent

METHOD/ GENDER	AGE GROUP (YEARS)														SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	< 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +	Unk		
Cardiovascular	0	0	0	0	1	1	21	52	62	52	58	50	8	1		306
Male	0	0	0	0	1	0	15	44	47	42	42	27	2	0	220	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	8	15	10	16	23	6	1	86	
Respiratory	12	0	0	0	0	1	2	16	9	10	7	2	1	0		60
Male	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	8	6	1	0	0	32	
Female	6	0	0	0	0	1	2	9	5	2	1	1	1	0	28	
Other	4	0	0	0	0	6	11	12	10	2	3	0	0	1		49
Male	1	0	0	0	0	3	8	10	6	2	2	0	0	1	33	
Female	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	16	
Central Nervous	0	1	0	0	0	4	5	7	4	1	3	5	0	0		30
Male	0	1	0	0	0	2	5	3	3	1	1	3	0	0	19	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	1	0	2	2	0	0	11	
Hepatic	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	7	5	3	2	0	0	0		20
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	3	3	0	0	0	0	12	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	8	
Malignancy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	5	3	0	0		17
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	5	1	0	0	13	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	4	
Undetermined	0	1	0	0	1	2	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0		13
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Female	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	11	
Endocrine	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	0	0		11
Male	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	0	0	11	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Gastrointestinal	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0		5
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	4	
Female	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Total	16	0	0	4	17	45	99	102	75	79	61	9	2	0		511
Percent	3	0	0	.8	3	9	19	20	15	16	12	2	.4	0		

Table 5-4 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Gender of the Decedent

CIRCUMSTANCES	GENDER		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Cardiovascular	220	86	306
Respiratory	32	28	60
Other	33	16	49
Central Nervous	19	11	30
Hepatic	12	8	20
Malignancy	13	4	17
Undetermined	2	11	13
Endocrine	11	0	11
Gastrointestinal	4	1	5
Total	346	165	511
Percent	68	32	

